

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01

L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01

EB-11 COME-00 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /114 W

----- 101613

R 201100Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9947

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 1063

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BEXP, BE

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT

REF: OSLO 594

1. REPORT ON NORWEGIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS F-104 AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT ISSUE ENCOURAGING AND PROVIDES FURTHER SUPPORT FOR ARGUMENT THAT COMMON PROCUREMENT BY NATO AIR FORCES OFFERS MAXIMUM ADVANTAGES (ON STRATEGIC, TACTICAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL GROUNDS). HOWEVER, PACE AND PRESSURE OF DEVELOPMENTS UNDER WAY IN BELGIUM REQUIRE THAT WE PLAN OUR SALES-SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ON ASSUMPTION THAT THE BELGIAN DECISION WILL BE TAKEN AT LATEST BY SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1974.

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2. BELGIAN AIR FORCE HAS CONSISTENTLY STATED THAT ANY DELAY PAST JULY COULD REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACQUIRE A TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT. TO MEET THEIR TIMETABLE FOR REPLACING AGING F-104'S THEY MUST BEGIN RECEIVING NEW AIRCRAFT BY MID-1979. GIVEN FIVE YEAR LEADTIME REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CO-DEVELOPMENT OPTION, GOB DECISION REQUIRED BY MID-1974. THAT DECISION MAY IN FACT SLIP UNTIL FALL 1974 IN VIEW OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS. NEVERTHELESS WE DO NOT SEE HOW IT COULD BE POSTPONED PAST OCTOBER, MUCH LESS INTO 1975.

3. SHOULD ANY EXTENSIVE DELAY OCCUR, GOB WOULD BE FORCED TO SELECT A CURRENT OFF-THE-SHELF AIRCRAFT (JAGUAR, VIGGEN). BELGIAN AIR FORCE DOES NOT WISH TO MAKE THAT SORT OF CHOICE BUT FAILURE TO CONCLUDE AGREEMENT FOR NEW AIRCRAFT IN TIME TO OBTAIN MID-1979 DELIVERIES MEANS EITHER THAT OR A BELGIAN AF WITHOUT FIRST LINE AIRCRAFT BEGINNING IN THE LATE 1970'S.

4. IN VIEW OF THESE PARAMETERS FACING GOB, WE SUGGEST THAT ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE THEM TO POSTPONE DECISION WOULD BE DISADVANTAGEOUS TO USG. FALL OF BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IN JANUARY

AND INEVITABLE SLOWING DOWN OF GOB DECISION MAKING PROCESS MAY HOWEVER OFFER SOME ADDITIONAL TIME FOR NORWEGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER TO PURSUE HIS PLANS. MEANWHILE WE SHOULD IN ALL CAPITALS AFFECTED CONTINUE TO EXTOLL ADVANTAGES OF AIRCRAFT STANDARDIZATION, IN KNOWLEDGE THAT THE FIRST NATIONAL DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE FORTHCOMING IN THE CURRENT YEAR. STRAUSS-HUPE

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Message Attributes

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